

Appl. No. 09/554,344

Amdt. dated Nov 4, 2003

Reply to Office action of August 4, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of both the amendments presented above and the following discussion, the Applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application is anticipated under the provisions of 35 USC § 102. Thus, the Applicants believe that the pending claim is now in allowable form.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring adverse final action in any of the claims now pending in the application, the Examiner should telephone Ms. Alberta A. Vitale, Esq., Reg. No. 41,520, at (203) 469-8097 so that appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Specification amendments

Various amendments have been made to the specification to correct minor inadvertent grammatical errors that remained in that specification.

Specification arrangement

The Office action requests that an Abstract be filed as required under 37 CFR 1.72(b). Applicants have provided the text of the abstract in the Amendments to the specification section herein and have also provided a separate sheet for the abstract in Appendix A.

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Status of pending claims

Claim 1 has been presently amended. No claims have been canceled.

35 USC § 112 Rejections

The Office action has rejected claim 1 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1 has been amended herein to overcome the rejection.

35 USC § 102 Rejections

The Office action has rejected claim 1 under the provisions of 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated over the teachings in the Conoscenti patent (United States patent 5,627,836 issued to Lisa Conoscenti et al. on May 6, 1997 (hereinafter Conoscenti '836)). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 as noted above in response to the 35 USC § 112 rejection. In the interest of prosecution efficiency Applicants will address the 35 USC § 102 rejection as it pertains to amended claim 1. Applicants note that by the present amendments to claim 1, the rejection of claim 1 as being unpatentable over Conoscenti '836 is overcome.

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Claim 1 as amended is recited as follows:

ATM network, comprising a physical network (1) with different stations, wherein a stream of ATM cells is transferred from at least one source station (2) to a group of different destination stations ~~(3...12)~~ (3...12) via a virtual transmission path between the source station and said different destination stations, ~~which said~~ virtual transmission path is characterised by comprising ATM cells to which a certain "virtual path identifier", ~~VPI, (VPI₁)~~ VPI₁ has been assigned, ~~characterised in that the~~ virtual path with said virtual path identifier (VPI₁) comprises comprising various virtual connections, each ~~characterised by~~ comprising ATM cells to which a certain "virtual connection identifier", ~~VCI, VCI_(1...n)~~ VCI_(1...n) has been assigned, ~~in that furthermore the~~ said group of destination stations is (3...12) being subdivided into various subgroups, and in that the destination stations, which detect the VPIs and the VCIs of the ATM cells appearing at those stations, accepting only those ATM cells to which a VPI has been assigned equal to the VPI of the said virtual path of the group of destination stations and a VCI equal to the VCI of the virtual connection of the subgroup of destination stations. (Emphasis added in bold).

Assuming arguendo that Applicants' amendments do not overcome the 35 USC § 102 rejections, Applicants submit the rejections are respectfully traversed in the foregoing remarks.

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Independent Claim 1 was rejected as being unpatentable over Conoscenti '836. The Office action (paper no. 7) at paragraph 5 stated that:

Conoscenti et al. discloses a method that employs both a virtual path identifier (VPI) and a virtual channel identifier (VCI) in the administration of an ATM network. The network is composed in part by broadcast sources, subscriber terminals as well as the physical ATM network that supports the communication between them (See Figure 1). Conoscenti et al. employs the VPI to identify the broadcast source. The VCI identifies channels that are distributed by the broadcast source. In this manner, the VPI represents a group of subscribers assigned to a particular broadcast source. Similarly, the VCI forms a subgroup that represents subscribers who are provided access to the same channel by a specific broadcast source (See Column 2, lines 57-65).

Applicants respectfully contend that the rejection of claim 1 as being anticipated by Conoscenti '836 rests on a misunderstanding.

In Conoscenti '836 the VPI represents a "source identifier" (col. 4, line 48), identifying a "service provider" (col. 4, line 50) for particular content to be distributed. Supposing that the particular content is provided exclusively by a particular service provider, as seems to be done in Conoscenti '836, a one-to-one relationship exists between a service provider and a group of destination stations, but only during the period that

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the group concerned gets the particular content (requested earlier by the members of that group) (Figure 1, elements 11 and 17; col. 3, lines 39-46). That means that a particular destination station belongs consecutively to various groups, depending on the content requested by that station. In other words, a destination station "changes VPI", depending on the requested content (col. 6, line 66 to Col. 7, line 14). Therefore, the VPI does not represent a group of destination stations.

However, in the present application (Figure 1; page 1, lines 33-34), the VPI is used to characterize a group of destinations stations; different source stations (service providers in the language of Conoscenti '836) can send cells to the same group of destination stations, or to different groups of destination stations (see page 1, lines 16-18). That means that a particular VPI may be used by various source stations, and need not identify a particular source station. In other words, various source stations can share a particular VPI; a VPI does not represent a source identifier (page 1, line 38 to page 2, line 8).

In Conoscenti '836, the VCI represents the individual program (content) offered by a service provider (the service provider being identified by the associated VPI value; col. 3, lines 39-46). Again, supposing that the particular content is provided exclusively by a particular provider, there is a one-to-one relationship between the VCI and the service provider and consequently, between the

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value of the VCI and that of the VPI. In this case, it follows straight from the definition of the VCI that a destination station "changes VCI", depending on the requested content (col. 6, line 66 to Col. 7, line 14). The VCI does not represent a subgroup of destination stations.

With Applicants invention, on the other hand, the VCI is used to distinguish between subgroups of a group of stations with a particular VPI. See page 1, lines 22-29, where the invention is summarized:

[M]essages that are destined for a certain group of stations and which are transferred thereto via a virtual path, comprised of ATM cells to which the VPI of that virtual path has been assigned, are selectively extracted upon arrival by means of the "virtual connection identifier", VCI, of the ATM cells.

The VCI is used to address a particular subgroup of destination stations.

Conclusion

Thus, the Applicants submit that the claim, presently in the application, is not anticipated under the provisions of 35 USC § 102.

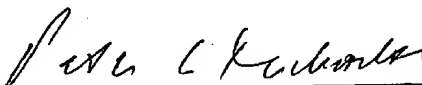
Consequently, the Applicants believe that all these claims are presently in condition for allowance.

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Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and
its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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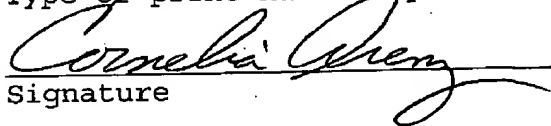
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(PTT35AMENDMENT/ca:118)